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ABSTRACT

Career development has evolved from the mid-1970s, when it was rarely linked with the word "organizational," to Walter Storey's work in organizational career development at General Electric in 1978. Its evolution has continued with career development workshops in organizations in the early 1980s to implementation of Corning's organizational career development systems. A 1991 survey of 1,000 organizations revealed nearly 70 percent had or were beginning career development systems. Career Directions, Inc., uses the term "career management" to describe the process; career development is the outcome. Career development has three major components: self-insight; organizational information to permit career focus to manage one's career in ways consistent with company direction and needs; and goal setting, action planning, and plan implementation. To ensure that employees' career development is aligned with business needs, companies target development in competencies or "cascade information" about business goals. Three evolving models for comprehensive career development systems are: employee-driven, training-based; employee-driven, self-directed; and manager-driven models. Seven aspects to consider to achieve a systematic approach to career development are as follows: vision, shared responsibility, linking to business needs, employee assessment, management support and accountability, organizational information, and implementation and monitoring. Barriers to organizational career development are: compensation systems, labor unions, and neglect of nonprofessional employees. (YLB)

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ED 418 223

BENCHMARKING ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

Development Through Lifelong Learning Conference

Australian Institute of Training and Development
Port Douglas, Queensland
October 2, 1995

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BENCHMARKING ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

1970's

In the mid-1970's, the field of career development rarely if ever was linked with the word "organizational". At the time, *career planning* was a concept just starting in schools, with a decidedly vocational focus. I.E. if a student was headed for college or a university, he or she did not need career planning in high school. Career planning was beginning to be considered important for those students about to enter the job market.

I entered the field at that time, when US funds were established for *career education*. This emphasis was on educating every student-elementary, high school and then college-about the world of work and a broader understanding of careers. The movement was in part driven by the gender equity issues. Why were 97 % of female students entering only a small percent of occupations?

A United States Office of Career Education was funded, as part of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Working with Dr. Ken Hoyt in Washington D.C., I researched the scope of career education in the US, but no attention was paid at all to career *development* for adults. Any development in the workplace was called *employee development*, and was

primarily focused on job-specific training, which also was rarer then.

I entered the field of *adult career development* in 1978, when the most notable and visible work in organizational career development was being done in General Electric by Walter Storey. A pioneer in the field, his work set the stage for a slow, but growing field actually being called *career development*[5]

1980's

In the early 1980's, efforts at career development in organizations were primarily workshops, not comprehensive systems. Some training and human resource persons, many having come out of education, attempted to use student interest tests with adults in organizations,with mostly negative results. I remember being asked to design a career development program for a consumer products company in 1981. Until then, employees who had career issues would go to the personnel department for help and were given the *Strong Campbell Interest Inventory*. It was computer scored, with a narrative printout, so it was assumed that no interpretation was necessary. As I began my workshop with employees, one man who was an accountant said, "I hope you aren't going to give us that damn interest inventory; it told me I should be a fireman!" The inherent problems were many: There was no professional interpretation to help the accountant understand what the test was measuring and what it meant, but in addition, it was the wrong instrument for adults in organizations. It was not designed to be used for *career development planning*, but for students looking at the whole range of occupations possible.

Interactive workshops were somewhat better when well designed. They provided an opportunity to explore individual values and interests, assess skills, and most importantly, learn *how to manage one's own career development* within the organization. Most organizations still were very paternalistic about employees' careers. The message still was, "Do a good job and don't make waves and we'll take care of you." In fact, I had many senior managers and even human resources people say they couldn't "do" career development, because they couldn't promote everyone. The whole mindset was still that development meant moving up. We had the challenge then to convince decision makers that they needed to support career development, and assist employees in the process precisely because they couldn't promote everyone! Many organizations in the 80's began by offering programs but not calling them career development because people hadn't yet learned to broaden their thinking about what was meant. We called programs individual development, individual development initiatives, personal development, personal growth, etc. Companies did not want to raise unrealistic expectations.

One of the earliest comprehensive organizational career development systems was implemented at Corning in New York. Corning is a major supplier of products and services in specialty glass and ceramic materials. In the mid 1980's, Corning launched a career development and information program for administrative and technical employees. The program has continued to evolve over the last decade, becoming an integrated career development system, which reaches 70% of all management and professional employees.[2]

Its key features include career development tailored to divisional strategies through a workbook customized for different groups of employees, executive briefings which give an overview of the career development process and senior managers' role, and manager training in career development and coaching skills. The career development program is integrated with other development programs and tools, such as performance appraisals and quality improvement.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT TODAY

The changes that occurred in US organizations in the 1980s have had a significant impact on the importance of career development programs. With major downsizing, restructuring and reengineering in full swing, it has become obvious to employees and managers alike that a new perspective on careers is needed. The old career paths are gone, the unwritten contract of "employment for life" has been broken, the rules have changed, and yet companies need higher level skills faster than ever before.

1991 Survey

A 1991 survey of 1000 U.S. organizations revealed that nearly 70% said they had, or were beginning career development systems.[3] (The data is not intended to be representative of all US corporations because companies volunteered to participate in the survey.) The factors driving career development in these organizations include:

Factors	Percentage of Respondents
• Desire to develop or promote from within	23%
• Shortage of key skills or ready talent	14%
• Organizational commitment to career development	13%
• Support for organization's strategic plan	12%
• Need to motivate employees under conditions of limited growth	8%
• Strong expression of employee interest in career planning	6%

At Career Directions, Inc, our work is primarily driven by three factors, which differ in priority from the above quoted survey.

- Following downsizing, the need for "survivors" to be more flexible to meet various company needs, and to reframe their thinking about careers.
- Employee opinion surveys with career development the number one need expressed.
- The speed of learning needed to keep pace with changing skill sets, and the need for employees to recognize, be partners in, and have a plan for their own development.

The Career Management Process

We prefer to use the term, *career management*, to describe the on-going process. *Career development* is the outcome, the growth that occurs as a result of successful career management. This may occur by changing positions or a promotion, but more likely in today's organizations it is growing in place. The demands of many jobs have expanded and continue to change quickly, providing challenge just to stay current and continue to add value.

Career Directions uses the term *Strategic Career Management* ™, defined as *planning, preparing, implementing and monitoring career actions in ways consistent with the direction and needs of the organization.*

Today we see more organizations understanding the need for career development *systems*. They see that just providing self-assessment tools for career planning is not the answer. While one component of career development, self insight is only one of three major components. The model we use is depicted in Figure 1.

In addition to self insight, employee awareness of their values, needs and skills, a successful system must include organizational information, or access to it. If you are asking employees to manage their careers in ways consistent with the direction and needs of the company, they have to know what the direction and needs of the company are. If you are saying that promotions are not the only way to grow, but to consider lateral moves, additional responsibility on their present job, cross functional moves to provide a broader base, then employees need to be some way for employees to gain access to department and position information. And they need to know the trends, and implications of these trends, in order to plan pro-actively, not just react when changes occur.

Thirdly, employees need to set goals and create action plans so they can actively manage their development, and set about implementing the plans.

Components of Career Planning

Figure 1

We find organizations providing one component of this process and calling it career development. For example, one HR person told me, "Oh yes, we have career development; we have a tuition assistance program." Some companies start with a form called an Individual Development Plan and wonder why employees and managers don't get excited about using it. One company that worked for several months trying to determine what a plan should look like, had to learn that the plan itself was the last step, not the first, in a successful career development initiative.

Criteria for Excellence

The American Society for Training and Development's Career Development Professional Practice Area each year has provided an award for organizational career development.[4] The company that is selected annually must have a *comprehensive* career development system and is judged by the following criteria:

- Career development has been approached from a systems perspective with a broad scope of implementation.
- The process is linked to business strategy.
- There is demonstrated creativity and originality in the design and implementation.
- There is support and involvement from line and top management.
- There is attention to both individual and organizational needs.
- There are demonstrated results or impact from the program.

Aligning With Business Needs

In a presentation to the National Career Development Association 1995 meeting entitled *Aligning Career Development With Organizational Needs*, Amy Clement of the US Internal Revenue Service and I addressed the growing trend to identify *core competencies*. In fast changing environments, position requirements change quickly as well. Often they aren't even defined, let alone institutionalized, before there are different requirements emerging. In addition, it is limiting for an employee or manager to be focusing for development just on a job, rather than broader. The question is not,"What should I be doing on this job?" but, "What does the department, or business unit, or whole company, need me to be doing in order to achieve the business goals?" This question is being answered by some organizations which are analyzing the competencies that are needed by the whole company, or by function, job families, or levels of responsibility in the organization.

If your message to employees is that a promotion is not the only way to grow, nor the only goal they should have, then something needs to take its place. By targeting development in competencies, employees can be preparing for a changing environment, rather than for a position which may not exist when they are ready for it.

Another way companies are ensuring that employees' career development is aligned with business needs is by "cascading information" about business goals. Annually as the business plan is developed at the senior level, it is communicated to employees at all levels. In empowered organizations, groups of employees are then asked to contribute their thinking to

how best to achieve those goals, and create their performance and development goals accordingly. In one organization we are working with, the Division Director receives a summary of all employees' goals by category of business needs, and provides direction through managers about areas that need more or less emphasis. Performance goals are written for the year and evaluated quarterly. Career goals are longer term, and totally up to the employee, but with a career discussion with managers.

In any efforts to link individual development with organizational needs, managers are the critical link. Regular career discussions (at least annually), separate from performance evaluations, provide a process for building a developmental relationship, communicating the business and department needs, reality testing, and creative approaches to development on the job.

Models for Career Development Systems

Several models are evolving for comprehensive approaches to career development. Three are included here: 1) employee driven, training based; 2) employee driven, self directed, and 3) manager driven. (See Figures 2, 3 and 4). The choice of model is typically determined by:

- the organization's culture (emphasis on training, structured programs, traditional role of managers, etc.)
- time availability for employees to be off-the-job and budget considerations
- empowerment message and motivation of employees to participate
- commitment by the organization to a change of culture

Employee Driven, Training Based Career Development Planning

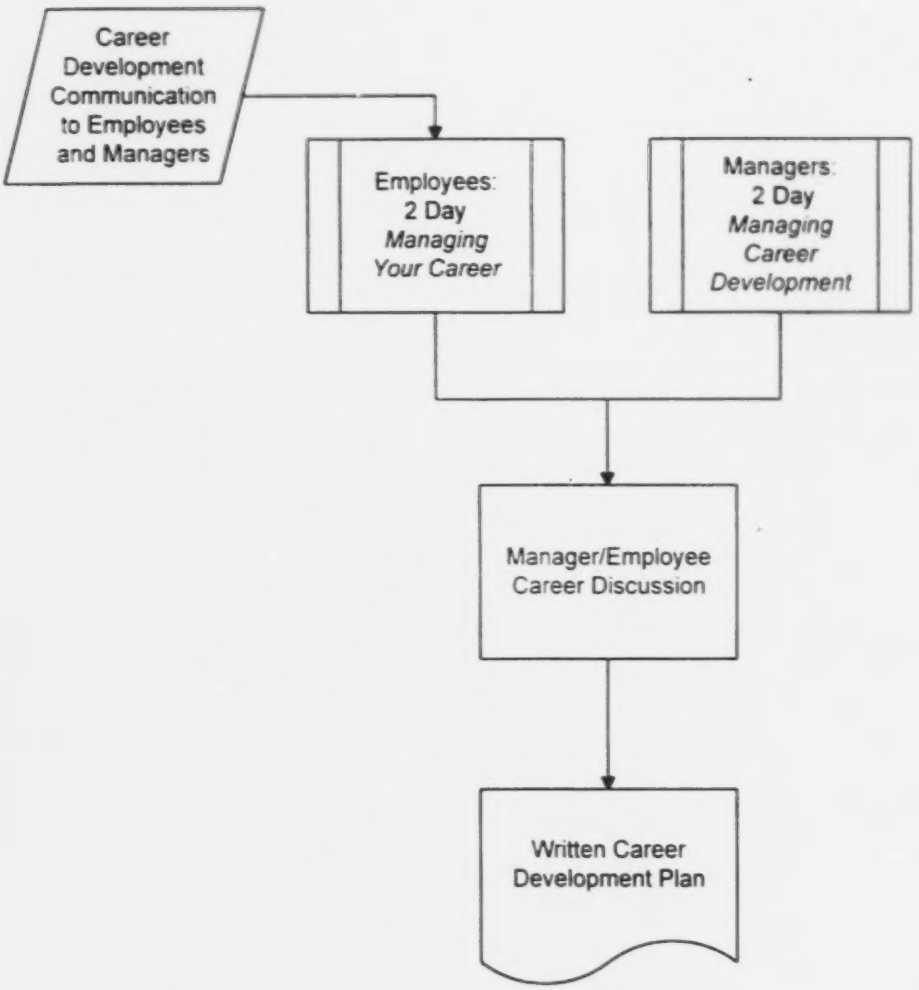
Career Development Communication to Employees and Managers
Employees: 2 Day *Managing Your Career*
Managers: 2 Day *Managing Career Development*
Manager/Employee Career Discussion
Written Career Development Plan

Figure 2

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Employee Driven - Self-directed Career Development Planning

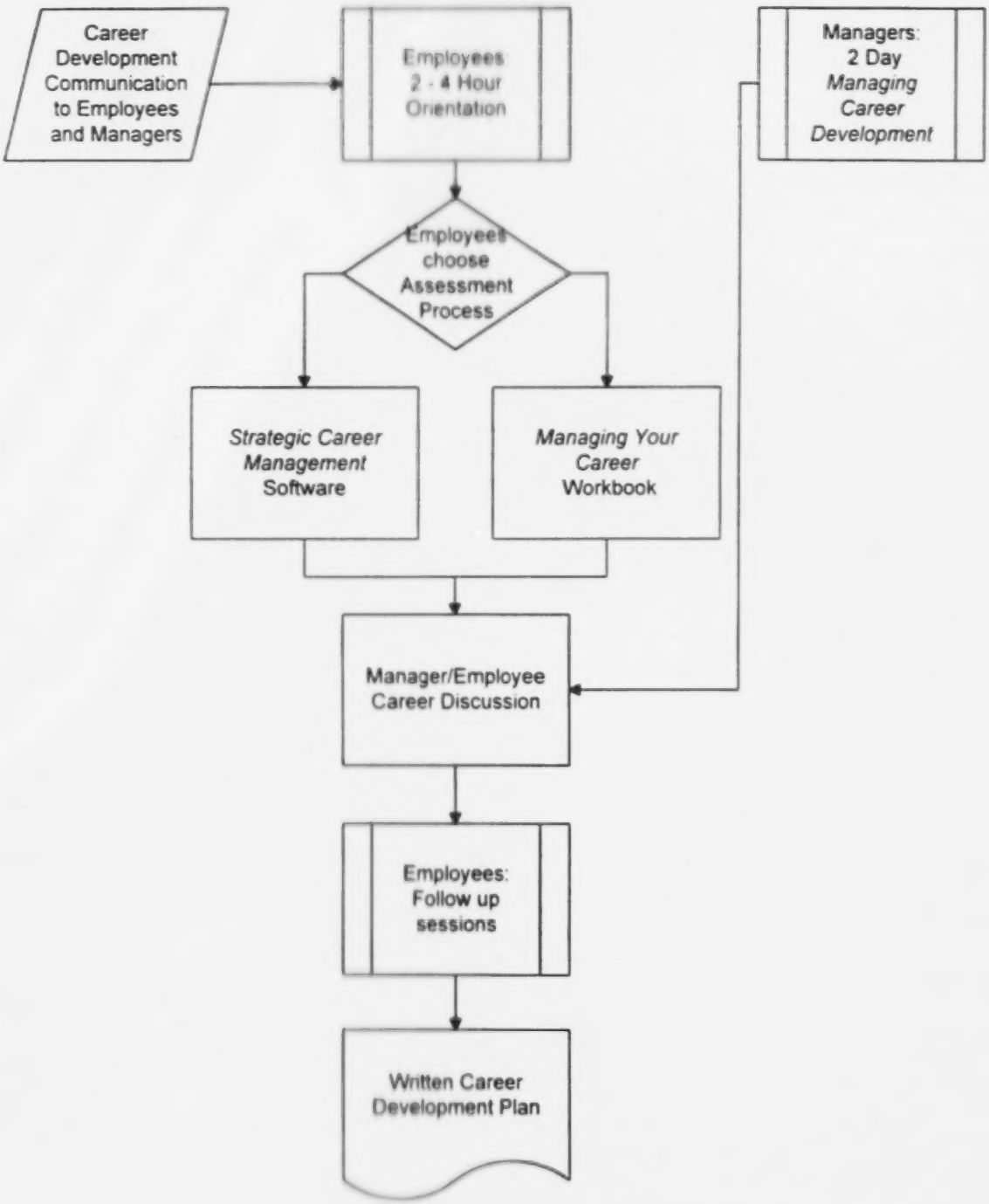
Career Development Communication to Employees and Managers
Employees 2 - 4 Hour Orientation
Managers: 2 Day *Managing Career Development*
Employees choose Assessment Process
Strategic Career Management Software
Managing Your Career Workbook
Manager/Employee Career Discussion
Employees: Follow up sessions
Written Career Development Plan

Figure 3

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Manager Driven Career Development Planning

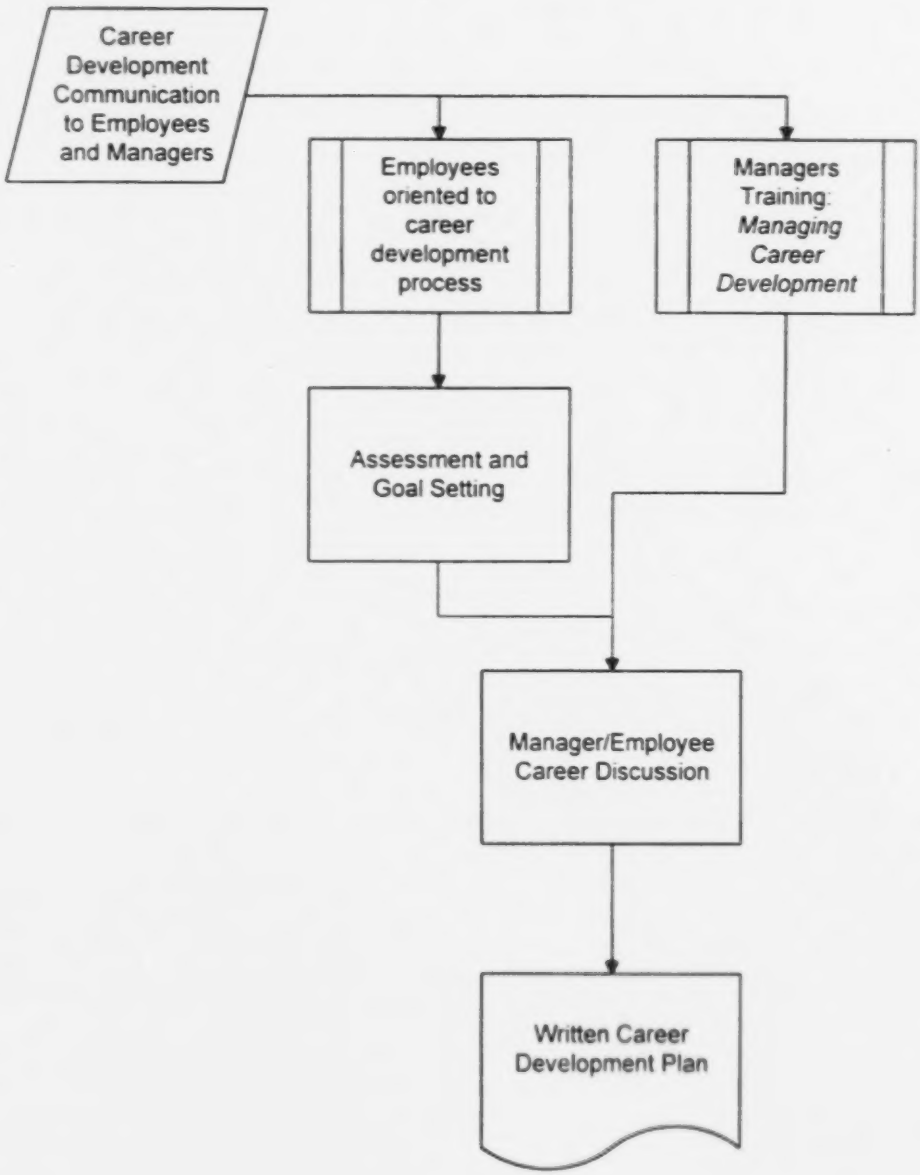
Career Development Communication to Employees and Managers
Employees oriented to career development process
Managers Training: *Managing Career Development*
Assessment and Goal Setting
Manager/Employee Career Discussion
Written Career Development Plan

Figure 4

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The advantage of training-driven models are that a consistent "message" is communicated to everyone participating in training, and much of the assessment and planning can happen in a two-day class. The disadvantage is that employees are still being "taken care of" even when the message is to manage your own career.

The advantages of self-directed models are that employees can progress at their own pace, they tend to be less costly than training-intensive programs, and a variety of learning methods can be included. The disadvantages are that some employees who particularly need to take responsibility for their own development may not choose to participate, and their is less likelihood of a culture change occurring because the process is less directed.

The advantages of a manager-driven process are that the business needs can drive employee goals, and it requires managers to be active in the process. The disadvantages are that employees are dependent on the involvement of their manager and it reinforces the old, "top down" control.

Patterns of Success

The authors of *Organizational Career Development* summarize that a systematic approach is needed for career development, like any major change effort, to have long-lasting impact and to change the culture.[5] Seven aspects to consider in order to achieve a systematic approach were presented in *Designing Career Development Systems Aligned with Organizational Realities*, a pre-conference workshop at ASTD, June, 1995.[6]

- *Vision.* A philosophy of career development developed by all stakeholders will keep a system viable, even if its sponsors change.
- *Shared responsibility.* The organization, managers and employees all must understand their roles and responsibility for career management.
- *Linking to business needs.* Without a visible linkage, career development is seen as a "nice to have", but not essential.
- *Employee assessment.* Employees must be clear about their own motivations and direction in order to put energy into development. A variety of approaches and tools strengthens the effort.
- *Management support and accountability.* Senior managers and line managers must be players, even if it means a long process of convincing them of the importance of their role. Programs "owned" by HR tend to be seen as "the program of the month".
- *Organizational information.* Employees cannot manage their careers intelligently if organization information is guarded. As much information as exists needs to be openly shared.
- *Implementation and monitoring.* Many good programs have been launched with enthusiasm and then wither on the vine, for lack of on-going visibility and support. Successful systems have built-in renewal processes.

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PERSONNEL JOURNAL

By Peg O'Herron and Peggy Simonsen

Career Development Gets a Charge at Sears Credit

After a major restructuring that created many new jobs and changed the existing ones, Sears Credit designed a career-development process that stresses individual responsibility.

Attention to career development is important at any stage of a company's life cycle. But as Sears Credit learned, it's especially critical after a major reorganization. The company's strategic plan prompted the Hoffman Estates, Illinois-based firm to close approximately 50 small units, expand nine others, offer a major voluntary retirement program and accept third-party credit cards in competition with the Sears-Charge card—all of which impacted the careers of Sears Credit's associates. To better align associates' skills and work loads with the reengineered company, Sears Credit launched a major career-development initiative. The process Sears Credit went through is discussed below by Peg O'Herron, manager of training and development for Sears Credit, and Peggy Simonsen, president of Career Directions, a career-development consulting firm based in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, that Sears brought in to assist in the process.

Reorganization required new career strategies. Sears Credit is responsible for all credit transactions in the retail stores and other field units of Sears Merchandise Group. In 1990, the firm employed about 13,000 people at 50 field locations. By 1994, consolidation had reduced the number of locations to 20 and shrunk the work force to 10,000. Although the firm closed several units, some of those remaining grew tremendously—from an average of 350 associates to 1,000 associates per operating center.

This reorganization had many career implications:

- Virtually all jobs were newly created or significantly redefined
- No longer were there career paths to emulate due to the number of new and redefined jobs and the elimination of others
- There was a need for outside hiring at all levels to obtain new talent immediately. This was a major change for a culture that traditionally promoted from within and wasn't used to external hiring
- There was a need to develop new skills in the current work force to succeed in the new environment
- There was a need to develop "bench" strength of associates prepared to fill future openings.

To respond to the major cultural, staffing and structural changes at Sears Credit, senior management worked with human resources and training professionals to es-

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tablish the company's overriding goals. The group determined that it wanted the company to have more open communication about career opportunities, the development needs of individuals and new staffing procedures.

The group also established that Sears Credit needed to help its associates and managers reframe their mindset—from "the company will take care of me" to a proactive attitude that redefined success in terms of what's important to the individual rather than how fast one moves up the ladder. People would need to understand, not just hear, that career development wouldn't be limited to promotions.

The company also needed to redefine responsibility. Not only would associates have to take on new responsibility for managing their own careers, but managers also would need to recognize their role as coaches in supporting associate development. The organization, too, represented by HR practitioners and senior management, had responsibility to provide information and resources so associates could take the initiative. In short, Sears Credit needed a partnership to ensure that individuals at all levels could continually add value to the company.

The group also determined that, to move beyond words to action, associates needed to know their skills and understand their marketability, and also know how to identify opportunities for development. They needed a planning process to create goals that included ones other than promotions. And to be viable, goals had to be linked to the business needs and the direction of the changing organization.

Finally, HR, trainers and senior managers realized that everyone needed to break away from "next job" thinking and take a longer, broader perspective of their careers and career-development options.

Planning the project. With these goals in mind, the organization formed a project planning team led by us—the manager of training and development at Sears Credit and the president of Career Directions. We began planning in January 1992 and anticipated to roll out the process in May. We felt it was important for both internal consultants from HR, training and senior management, and the external consultant to partner throughout the process.

We recognized that for a major cultural change to occur, Sears Credit needed a comprehensive, organizationwide career-development process. And each process component had to contribute to creating organizational culture change and promoting individual growth.

Some firms start wherever they can when launching career-development systems. We decided instead to complete as many of the components as possible and ensure senior management support before launching associate and manager training.

In fact, a key element was sponsorship by senior managers. Jane Thompson, Sears' executive vice president of credit, was a leading champion of the career-development initiative and provided periodic updates for the organization throughout the roll-out. "In Sears Credit we had a number of elements of a high-performance team," she says. "We had a strong commitment to performance evaluations that entailed a real dialogue between the manager and the associate. We had a commitment to training. We had gainsharing in many of our units. What we were missing, however, was a chance to make it clear to people what the career opportunities are, what it takes to take advantage of opportunities and move ahead, and what skills are needed to do one's job better and prepare for the future."

Defining the skills and competencies needed for success within the restructured jobs was another key element of the process. We defined the competencies after surveying associates and reviewing their responses with managers. They fell into five major categories: business knowledge and contribution to financial results; leadership; customer focus; individual effectiveness; and associate development.

After identifying detailed competencies and skills and communicating them to the organization during career-development workshops, we developed manager/peer-assessment and self-assessment inventories. These allow associates to identify growth areas for themselves. We then expanded the annual career discussion that associates had with their managers and separated them from the appraisal review. We also made the career discussion optional. This allows associates to take the initiative in leading the discussion and scheduling it at a time that best fits their personal goal-setting process.

VITALS

ORGANIZATION
Sears Credit, unit of Sears Merchandise Group

TYPE OF BUSINESS
Consumer credit-card issuer

HEADQUARTERS
Hoffman Estates, Illinois

OPERATIONS
20 operating facilities across the United States

EMPLOYEES
10,000

SIZE OF HR/TRAINING STAFF
Nine

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
Jane J. Thompson

DIRECTOR OF HR AND TRAINING
Tom Cataruzolo

HR'S ROLE IN CAREER-DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
"The career-development process was the catalyst that changed personal career planning from passive participation of each manager to a very active role in individual career growth," says Tom Cataruzolo. "It heightened the awareness of self-assessments, job competencies and performance. More importantly, it helped foster an environment of openness."

YOU SHOULD KNOW
Sears Credit's career-development initiative received national recognition from the American Society for Training and Development.

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Project Team Members' Responsibilities

Internal and external consultants partnered during design and implementation of a new career-development process for Hoffman Estates, Illinois-based Sears Credit. According to Peg O'Herron, Sears Credit's manager of training and development, and Peggy Simonsen, president of Rolling Meadows, Illinois-based Career Directions, responsibilities were shared as follows:

	TD*	HR*	SRM*	EC*
• Educate key stakeholders	x			x
• Plan scope of career-development process	x	x		x
• Define philosophy and responsibilities for career-development	x	x	x	
• Gather extensive associate feedback	x			x
• Report feedback and recommendations to senior managers	x			x
• Initiate HR systems redesign	x	x		
• Provide organizational direction and strategy for individual career planning		x	x	
• Design employee and manager career-development workshops	x			x
• Communicate career-development process and components	x	x	x	
• Conduct pilot training sessions	x			x
• Launch training organizationwide	x	x	x	x
• Support ongoing career-development efforts		x	x	
• Evaluate process and refine ongoing efforts	x	x	x	x

* Training and Development Manager
* Human Resources and Training
* Senior Managers
* External consultant

Because this proactive approach to career development was a relatively new concept for all associates in the organization, we planned training to help reframe thinking and give people tools to use in their career planning. All exempt associates participated in a two-day workshop, "Managing Your Career Within Sears Credit." The workshop incorporated new models of career development, self-assessment activities, organizational information and a development-planning process.

Managers attended an additional workshop—"Managing Career Development"—because they needed career-coaching skills for discussions with their subordinates as well as advice on how to manage their own careers. Although participation in some other company programs is voluntary, we mandated the introductory training on this issue for all salaried staff, after which associates could choose whether to participate further in the career-development process. However, further involvement of managers whose associates request career discussions was mandatory.

Since the old, known ways had changed, Sears Credit had to adopt a more open philosophy about opportunities and company information. We needed HR systems such as position descriptions, organizational competencies and a new compensation structure to support career-development efforts and reinforce the overall message of development to meet company needs. This prompted us to write position summaries of the many new jobs that the organizational restructuring created and make them available to all associates via E-mail. In the past, Sears had treated this information as confidential. HR managers safeguarded it, and it wasn't available to associates.

We also created a data bank of associates' desired career goals to be used for organizational planning and staffing decisions. The associate and his or her manager develop the information for the data bank. The input includes details such as, "job next aspired to," "preferred location" or "education needed." This information is available to match against specific jobs in specific locations and to assist in planning training for a particular population.

One of the most important components of the career-development system was a new compensation program. When the message is that development doesn't necessarily mean promotion, associates perceive a conflict if a highly rigid compensation structure rewards only upward moves. Tom Cataruzolo, director of HR, spearheaded a change to a broadbanding compensation program that rewards developmental moves previously considered "lateral" and not entitled to a promotional increase (see "Broadbanding Compensation Aligns With New Career Development").

Communication was, and continues to be, essential throughout the career-development process. Once we determined the initial design, components, responsibilities and deadlines, we created a brochure to communicate these aspects first to managers at a semi-annual national meeting, then to all exempt Sears Credit associates nationwide. In addition, we had continual discussion and correspondence from the executive vice president.

To continue communications, Sears Credit issues a quarterly newsletter entitled "Career Developments." The newsletter highlights various segments of Sears Credit to familiarize associates with opportunities; introduces associates and describes directions their careers take; reviews career-related books; and delivers messages from management.

Career development process proves positive. Six months after all exempt associates and their managers participated in training sessions, we conducted surveys and focus groups to ensure that the program's design met associates' and managers' needs. We also used surveys to collect base-line data that would allow us to measure the impact of the career-develop-

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ment initiative and to determine if we achieved our program objectives. We did.

Most associates now are taking responsibility for their own career management. In fact, 93% report they have specific career goals and a plan to reach those goals. They also report that they're more aware and realistic about their interests, strengths and development needs, and that they're more knowledgeable about the competencies needed for different levels of responsibility and compensation bands.

Approximately 80% of associates have had career discussions with their managers, and a majority of those recorded their goals into the database to communicate them to HR for staffing decisions. We've put in place a systematic method of accessing associates' goals and managers' recommendations for job placement.

Managers are more knowledgeable about associate career goals and are involved in associate development. A forthcoming development guide will provide even more creative development options and resources to managers and associates. Also, senior executives are involved in planning and actively supporting career development throughout the organization.

Sears Credit continues to experience change. New opportunities and challenges surface rapidly, requiring associates to be proactive in their current assignments and in their career planning. The company has learned that a comprehensive career-development process is a critical contributor to organizational success, especially after major restructuring. Support for individuals such as that provided by a career-development process, results in a motivated work force eager to accomplish business initiatives. ■

Peg O'Herron is the manager of training and development for Sears Credit. Peggy Simonsen is president of Rolling Meadows, Illinois-based Career Directions.

Broadbanding Compensation Aligns With New Career Development

When Hoffman Estates, Illinois-based Sears Credit implemented a new career-development process, it needed to change its compensation system to reward for lateral as well as upward moves. A broadbanding program that places all jobs in one of the four categories listed below proved ideal.

PROFESSIONAL

Individual contributors and supervisors of hourly associates

TEAM/PROJECT LEADER

Supervisors of salaried and hourly associates and activity managers

ORGANIZATIONAL

Heads of units, functions and businesses

EXECUTIVE

Directly reports to officers of the company.

—PO & PS

For information about how Career Directions, Inc., can help your organization, please contact us:

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PROFILES OF SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

Many organizations in the US are doing *some* things right in their approach to career development. Some seem to be doing everything right. Following are some case studies which benchmark career development practices in the US.

Sears Credit Organization

The career development process at Sears Credit is an example of Model 1, employee-driven, training-based[7] (See Exhibit 1).

Organizations approach the employee-driven, self-directed approach in several different ways.

Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

Background

Traditionally a very stable, US government affiliated organization, "The Fed" is now experiencing reorganization and downsizing of several departments. Because of major changes in banking regulations in the US, and technology advancements, the organization needs employees at all levels not to be dependent and static, but proactive, adaptive, and learning new skills quickly.

Approach

In a culture where managers are bankers and economists, and not traditionally strong in people development, career development was established as employee-driven, with many organizational resources. They selected managers who *were* very developmental with their

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people and invited them to be trained as career advisors. Employees who wished to participate could select workbooks, software or other resources for their self assessment, then request a meeting with an advisor for organizational information, reality testing, or other aspects of a career discussion. In addition, workshops for employees and training programs for managers are being offered. A career center includes industry and organizational information as well as formal assessment instruments. A major competency study was completed and made available to employees, managers and advisors. Regular "Discovery Series" sessions are scheduled, with senior managers providing an overview of the trends and issues in their area. So a smorgasbord of resources and assistance is available. Roll out has been to all employees, on an interest basis.

Internal Revenue Service

Background

The IRS established a career development process across the country in the mid 1980's. It was career center-based, staffed with professional career counselors. The primary users of the system were employees who wanted to make a job change, or a geographic move. It included assessment processes and organizational information. Then in the early 1990's, in response to major reengineering and downsizing, the focus of career development needed to be changed.

Approach

Keeping their staffed career centers, the IRS added a new dimension called CareerView. Employees and managers needed to reframe their thinking about career development, and take

more responsibility for maintaining and upgrading their skills to continue to add value. A comprehensive analysis of competencies by job families was undertaken, resulting in a major resource for development of essential skills and knowledge. A training program and guide for managers and employees was developed to communicate the changing dimension of career development. Each employee now is expected to create and use a development plan.

Caterpillar

Background

A major manufacturer of heavy equipment for construction and mining, Caterpillar plants are found primarily in small or medium sized towns, and as such they are the primary employer in each site. Employees tend to go to work for the company at a young age, and expect to be employed for life. The company experienced a major downsizing in mid 1980's, and emerged more competitive and aggressive in its worldwide market. With manufacturing technology changing at a rapid pace, and increasingly higher levels of skills needed, the "paternalistic" employer-employee relationship had to change. Individuals needed to take more responsibility for managing their own careers and growth within the company.

Approach

Each business unit of the company operates fairly autonomously, and so several different approaches to career development have evolved. One unit has undertaken a combination training self-directed approach. Employees attend a one-day workshop, may then choose to complete their self assessment and planning with a workbook or software, and use a data

base of competencies for their own job or those they are targeting. Managers participate in training, then have career discussions with their employees. Finally, employees come to a half-day workshop to complete a development plan. The plan then is entered into a data base for HR staffing and planning.

Another Caterpillar business unit is using a self-directed process, with a group introduction to career development, then self directed assessment with software or workbooks, and the help of a professional counselor/advisor who is on-site one to two days per week. Participants have access to organizational resources available in a center, and then complete a development plan with the help of the advisor if needed.

Sybase, Inc.

Background

Sybase is an innovative technology company which develops and services client-server software.

Growing fast, and in a very competitive market, they needed to implement a career development process to educate and assist employees and managers in the needs and opportunities internally. They needed to reduce turnover among longer enured employees who had grown up in an enterpreneurial environment. They also needed to help new employees settle in for long term commitments to the company.

Approach

Using a manager-driven model, Sybase trained all managers in the career development process and skills to conduct career discussions. They oriented employees with a brief kick-off presentation, and provided all employees with a self assessment and planning workbook. They also compiled a major resource of company information to support development in place as well as internal moves.

Managers conducted career discussions with every employee, resulting in written career development plans. Managers support implementation of the plans, even when it means helping employees move to another department or geographic location.

BARRIERS TO ORGANIZATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Compensation Systems

One of the continuing barriers to integration and acceptance of career development systems in organizations is compensation systems. At a presentation on the topic at the 1995 national ASTD conference entitled, *Career Development and Compensation, a Marriage Made in Heaven or Hell?,*[8] a "menage a trois" was indicated as ideal: System alignment among business needs, individual career management, and organizational support systems. Critical in the latter is compensation. The career development message may be, "There are many ways to grow in the organization. We value additional and increased skills in your present job, additional responsibility, lateral moves, cross functional moves to ensure cross communication, and even downward moves to position for changed responsibility." But if that

message is followed by, "But oh by the way, you only get a raise if you're promoted," the disconnect causes cynicism and devalues the very philosophy of the career development process.

One approach to this dilemma is *broad banding*. In the Sears Credit case study above, the change was made from 37 compensation grades to 4 broad bands, allowing for movement and growth for developmental purposes, and to meet business needs, without the restrictions of grades.

Labor Unions

The seniority system of the labor union structure restricts initiative and individual responsibility for development and quality. This at a time when manufacturing companies in particular need a higher level of skills than ever before. Career Directions, Inc is presently designing a *life-work planning* pilot program as a joint effort between the United Auto Workers and General Motors. It has three targeted areas for choice by employees: Career Plans, Life Plans and Retirement Plans, and three emphases for skill development: Basic Skills, Job Skills and Future Skills (similar to competencies discussed above.)

AT&T, the Communications Workers of America, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers through a joint effort called the Alliance, have established a successful system for career and life planning. While not replacing the seniority system of the unions, it does encourage employees to increase their employability, and provides resources to do so,

whether individuals plan to stay with the company or leave.

A recent article on The Changing Union Agenda[9] highlighted some progressive agreements between companies and unions to support the much needed development of skills and to soften the union restrictions which inhibit individual growth.

Non-professional Populations

Not a barrier to career development, but an area of neglect in many organizations, is what we call the "non-exempt" population. These are typically hourly workers, often clerical or direct labor, most of whom do not have bachelor's degrees. In some of the examples cited above, all employees were invited to participated, but in many otherwise comprehensive programs, the non-professional, non-managerial population is excluded. It is our experience that this group needs the benefit of a structured development process as much for all the same - or more - reasons. The issue in many organizations is that there is such a large group at this level, with few opportunities for promotions. But if we apply the same philosophy here as with professionals and managers, we would encourage growth in other ways besides up.

SUMMARY

It is an exciting time for career development practitioners in US. More decision-makers in organizations are recognizing the bottom-line impact of employees who are working at full capacity, contributing and adding value. There has been enough trial and error to know what

not to do. There are excellent examples of successful systems in place. There is creativity and diversity of approaches, meeting business needs and appropriate for diverse cultures. And there is a growing body of literature and professional attention to career development to draw on as we build and move forward in the field.

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